

CLAIMS:

- 1 1. A method to manage use of a program, comprising:
2 determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute;
3 measuring a usage time for said monitored program; and
4 sending said usage time to a monitoring program.
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- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining comprises:
2 a) receiving a request for authorization to execute from said monitored program;
3 b) authorizing said monitored program to execute for a time interval; and
4 c) sending said time interval to said monitored program.
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- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising repeating operations a) to c)
2 until a terminating event has occurred.
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- 1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein said measuring comprises adding each time
2 interval together to form said usage time once said terminating event has occurred.
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- 1 5. The method of claim 3, wherein said terminating event comprises receiving a
2 message indicating execution has stopped.
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- 1 6. The method of claim 3, wherein said terminating event comprises failure to
2 receive another request for authorization to execute within said time interval.
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1 7. The method of claim 2, wherein operations a) and c) are performed using
2 encrypted messages.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said monitoring program resides at a server, and
2 sending said usage time comprises:

3 requesting a connection to said server;

4 connecting to said server; and

5 sending said usage time to said monitoring program over said connection.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein said connection comprises a hypertext transfer
2 protocol connection.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein said connection comprises a secure hypertext
2 transfer protocol connection.

1 11. The method of claim 2, wherein said authorizing comprises retrieving said time
2 interval from an authorization table having at least one monitored program and
3 corresponding time interval.

1 12. A method to monitor use of a program, comprising:
2 receiving a usage time for a monitored program over a network connection, said
3 usage time representing a time said monitored program executed with authorization; and
4 reporting said usage time to a user corresponding to said monitored program.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
2 determining a cost value associated with said usage time; and
3 sending said cost value to said user.

1 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising sending an authorization table to a
2 managing program, said authorization table having at least one monitored program and a
3 corresponding time interval.

1 15. A method to manage use of a program, comprising:
2 determining whether a monitored program has authorization to execute; and
3 executing said monitored program in accordance with said determination.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said determining comprises:
2 requesting authorization to execute from a managing program; and
3 receiving authorization to execute from said managing program.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising sending a termination message to
2 said managing program.

1 18. The method of claim 15, wherein said determining comprises:
2 requesting authorization to execute from a managing program; and
3 failing to receive authorization to execute from said managing program within a
4 predetermined time period.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising terminating execution of said
2 monitored program.

1 20. A method to monitor use of a program, comprising:
2 determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute;
3 measuring a usage time associated with said monitored program;
4 reporting to a monitoring program said usage time; and
5 receiving said usage time at said monitoring program.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein said determining comprises:
2 requesting authorization to execute a monitored program;
3 authorizing said execution for a time interval; and
4 determining whether said monitored program has executed for said time interval.

1 22. An article comprising:
2 a storage medium;
3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute,
5 measuring a usage time for said monitored program, and sending said usage time to a
6 monitoring program.

1 23. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining whether a monitored program is authorized to

execute by receiving a request for authorization to execute from said monitored program,
authorizing said monitored program to execute for a time interval, and sending said time
interval to said monitored program.

24. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
processor, further result in sending said usage time by requesting a connection to said
server, connecting to said server, and sending said usage time to said monitoring program
over said connection.

25. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
processor, further result in connecting to said server using a hypertext transfer protocol
connection.

26. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
processor, further result in connecting to said server using a secure hypertext transfer
protocol connection.

27. An article comprising:
a storage medium;
said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
processor, result in receiving a usage time for a monitored program over a network
connection, said usage time representing a time said monitored program executed with

6 authorization, and reporting said usage time to a user corresponding to said monitored
7 program.

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1 28. The article of claim 27, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining a cost value associated with said usage time, and
3 sending said cost value to said user.

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1 29. The article of claim 28, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in sending an authorization table to a managing program, said
3 authorization table having at least one monitored program and a corresponding time
4 interval.

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1 30. An article comprising:
2 a storage medium;
3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in determining whether a monitored program has authorization to
5 execute, and executing said monitored program in accordance with said determination.

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1 31. The article of claim 30, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining whether a monitored program has authorization to
3 execute by requesting authorization to execute from a managing program, and
4 receiving authorization to execute from said managing program.

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1 32. An article comprising:
2 a storage medium;
3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute,
5 measuring a usage time associated with said monitored program, reporting to a
6 monitoring program said usage time, and receiving said usage time at said monitoring
7 program.

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1 33. The article of claim 32, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining whether a monitored program has authorization to
3 execute by requesting authorization to execute a monitored program, authorizing said
4 execution for a time interval, and determining whether said monitored program has
5 executed for said time interval.

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